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The proposed supplemental reading program (separate from the basic reading program) is designed to assist the Indian child to master basic reading skills early. Materials should be selected which relate to concepts and things with which the Indian child can identify, thus expanding his world and views gradually. Supplemental reading sessions should be scheduled so that children will have freedom to read, independently or in small unstructured groups, stories of their own selection. The teacher's role should be primarily that of supervisor of activities and consultant to individuals. An outline of recommended activities and procedures for a two-week series of classes and criteria for selection of reading materials are presented in this monograph (which is funded under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act). (JH)

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A PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTAL READING PROGRAM

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BY DR. HULDA GROESBECK

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A PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTAL READING PROGRAM

FOR RESERVATION INDIAN CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA

BY DR. HULDA GROESBECK

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creating a climate for change

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THE PROPOSAL

I. INTRODUCTION

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROGRAM

The children for whom this program is designed receive formal instruction in reading at age seven after having completed one year of instruction and practice in speaking English as a second language. They have had few experiences preceding this first year in school to prepare them for the language patterns and conceptual content of basal readers. Thus, in the primary grades they are presented with the task of accomplishing not one stage of transition in learning but three: 1) from the expression and reception of thought in the native tongue to the same processes in American English, 2) from the newly learned language signals to graphic signs for the same language signals, and 3) from familiar ideational and cultural patterns of thought to those of new and different people portrayed in the basal texts. Learning to read is in itself a task of some complexity. For these children its complexity is compounded threefold.

It is important that the Reservation Indian child master the reading skills early and well. He has much to learn, much to "make up", to prepare himself for a future which may be far different from the situation now in effect. His preparation will have a large part in shaping that future. Proficiency in reading opens wider the doors to learning, both academic and beyond the classroom.

B. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

It is in consideration of the unique and critical needs of these children that this program is designed. Its purpose is to lessen the complexity of the initial and most crucial stages of formal reading instruction by providing learning experiences with reading materials which have interest and meaning for the child. Characters portrayed in his reading will be those with whom he can identify or has familiarity. Settings and plots will have reality. Ideas presented will not be in direct conflict with those of his own people. Story content will expand his world and his vision but this will be brought about subtly rather than through sharp contrast.

These reading experiences will not replace but will supplement the existing basal reading program. Skills which have been presented will be reinforced through practice and added instruction as needs are revealed. A major goal is increased interest and motivation for more extensive reading.

II. THE PROGRAM

This is a structured reading program designed to reinforce and enrich the core experiences offered in the basal reader program. Each is an integral part of the total program. In order to be effective both must be identified by children and teachers as important parts of the learning to read process. Sensitive and knowledgable teachers will at this point be thinking beyond this discussion and envisioning ways of incorporating prepared "experience type" materials into their present programs. Many are now doing so with materials devised in their own classrooms. The organizational plan and instructional methods described herein are advised as a starting point for those teachers who have not discovered highly successful approaches and are recommended for further exploration by those who have.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

1. Scheduling

Definite periods for the supplemental program are scheduled. If two periods are set aside each day for reading instruction, the shorter of these, or the afternoon session if they are of the same duration, will be selected. If only one period is scheduled,

this time may be divided between the two types of activities by using the final portion or by scheduling one or two entire sessions per week for supplementary work. The last plan is most desirable. The least effective arrangement would be the assignment of supplemental materials for extra reading after completion of textbook assignments and seatwork activities. Benefits derived would be in inverse proportion to children's needs. The facile readers with strong motivation would receive the bulk of the practice and reward. The least mature and most reluctant readers would receive the least reward and reinforcement. It is the latter category who more frequently have the greater need.

2. Grouping

Grouping for reading activities in accordance with reading or mental abilities will not be used in the supplemental reading period unless such groups are formed on occasions by pupils independently. There will be total group activities and much independent individual work in the total group setting. Children will have freedom, and encouragement if such is indicated, to read and work in pairs or small groups. Group composition may reflect common interests, social preferences, individual or group needs, and occasionally teacher judgments and preferences. Thus, at certain times, the entire group will be listening and contributing to a discussion on stories about desert animals or listening to a report by a pupil, visitor, or the teacher. On rare occasions every child will be busily engrossed in his own independent reading activity, perhaps reading a book, writing a story, searching for stories on a topic of interest, or reading to the teacher. The typical situation will be one of variety. A child will move near a friend who willingly helps him with unknown words while reading with ease the book he has selected. Another child will be assisting a group in their search for stories of Indian legends. Three children will be seated at one side reading aloud with one another. Many may be seated at the reading table and at their own desks reading alone. The teacher may join a group for a few minutes. She may chat with someone about a new and interesting book. She will be engaged the major part of the time in conferences with individual students, observing and discussing with them their reading progress and interests.

There will be a strong feeling and a common understanding that this is reading time, an important period in the day when they may practice their skills by reading of things they most enjoy and wish to learn about. It is a time when anxiety producing reading situations are at a minimum. There is no reading to answer questions or to complete an assignment. Reading is for learning and enjoying and sharing.

B. INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

A comfortable class structure which provides freedom of action within well defined boundaries is generally most satisfying to children. This type of structure accompanied by an atmosphere of mutual respect, acceptance, and cooperation is essential for the success of this program. Its success is dependent also upon the degree to which children understand its purposes and what is expected of them. If they see meaning in its purposes; if expectations are readily achievable and intrinsically rewarding; they will "grow into" the program and its purposes will be achieved. Each facet must be introduced in such a way that it will be grasped fully. Moving too rapidly will delay, if not defeat, its effectiveness.

The following outline of procedures is presented with this in mind. It is set up on a day-by-day schedule for approximately the first two weeks. Teachers will improve upon and adjust this plan as need is indicated.

First Session: The new books have arrived and are on the shelves and displayed about the room. The teacher tells the children many things about them: ways in which the stories were collected and written; where they were printed; some of the topics and many of the titles; the artists who illustrated them. Several of the books are briefly reviewed. She selects one which will appeal to the entire group and reads part or all of it to the class. The children are then invited to examine the new books for the remainder of the period. If anyone wishes to check one out, he may do so.

Second Session: Discussion – Pupils' reactions to books. Did anyone find a book last time that he liked? Does he remember what it was about? Did anyone check out a book and read it all the way through? The teacher explains that in this class, lessons and books are not assigned by the teacher. Each person selects his own book and reads as much of it as he wishes and as rapidly as he likes. If he does not enjoy a book he has selected,

he may put it up and find one he likes. Today each is to take all the time he wants to look at the books and to choose one he would like to read all the way through. The teacher plays as active a part as seems advisable in helping with these first selections. If the children become restless before the close of the period, she reads aloud to the class.

Third Session: The teacher explains that in this kind of a reading class they may often find that the book they want to read will have new words which they have not learned. Many of these they can work out but there will be some with which they will need help. Ways of helping one another are discussed. This must be handled in such a matter-of-fact way that children will feel no shame in seeking help and will feel good at opportunities to assist others. The best readers will <u>not</u> be assigned as "class helpers." <u>Everyone</u> is a teacher. The remainder of the period will be a bit noisy. The teacher will move about, helping, suggesting, and moving a youngster now and then to where he can receive help more conveniently.

Fourth Session: Discussion – Different ways of reading. Some like to read aloud and some silently. Sometimes it is good to read with others, especially poems and stories with character parts. Sometimes it is more fun to read alone. The purpose of this and other introductory discussions is to help establish a natural and happy feeling of working together; to create good feelings of cooperation and break down attitudes of competition, superiority, and inferiority.

Fifth Session: The teacher has been encouraging, guiding, and listening to children's reading whenever occasions presented themselves. She now explains a plan whereby pupils can make special appointments for conferences by writing their names on the conference schedule posted near her desk. She asks for immediate volunteers, instructing each to bring something he would like to read with him, and starts the individual conferences which will continue most of the periods for the remainder of the term. She may wish to limit the number, and thus the time devoted to this activity, for several weeks in order to spend more time in supervision of group work.

During the conference the teacher listens to the child read a short selection which he has chosen—and prepared if he likes. She questions him about books and stories he has read. She writes in his section of her class record book 1) his readings to date, 2) strong points she notes in his reading behavior, 3) points in which he needs her help, and 4) suggestions which he can follow in improving his own reading. She explains these notes

carefully the first time so that there is no mystery or worry. Thereafter, items 2) and 4) are given emphasis in the discussion.

Sixth Session: The teacher commends the class on the quantity of reading that has been done. She asks how many have read one or more books. She says that she thinks it important to start keeping records of the progress they are making. Individual record books or materials for their construction are distributed. Plans are made with the class as to what should be recorded. Contents will vary widely with the maturity of groups and individuals. Items considered may include book or story titles and dates completed, brief summaries or evaluations of best liked books, progress notes, lists of important words learned, story illustrations, activity reports, diaries. Whatever the plans chosen, they are discussed thoroughly and much help is given as needed. Thereafter, each child may bring his record book to the conference for sharing and discussing. No rewards will be given; no tally of books read nor colorful book record charts will be posted. In short, the reluctant or slow reader who has completed two books will be given the same recognition and support as the highly motivated and fluent youngster who has completed twenty.

Seventh and Eighth or Ninth Session: The teacher asks for volunteers to find and read stories about a certain topic that has come up or, if none has, she expresses her own curiosity and questions and requests help from the pupils. She suggests that if they find something of interest to let her know when they are ready to report it to the class. She observes their progress and helps a bit if needed. She also sees that they take some time in class to get together and plan how to present or take turns at presenting their information. Whenever they are prepared, a period is turned over to them to take all the time they need in presenting their information to the class. Group discussion and questions are encouraged.

The teacher comments favorably on the report. Suggestions for setting up a regular time for special group reading activities are discussed and decided upon. A variety of ways of sharing may be brought up here and introduced in later discussions such as the reading of favorite poems and stories, telling stories, dramatizations, puppet plays, showing drawings that tell a story, pupil constructed opaque projector movies, original stories and poems, and book discussions. Tentative plans are made for the next group presentation.

This may seem to be an unnecessarily long period of time devoted to orientation. It may be for some children. Each teacher knows her own pupils. If the learning climate which this program purposes to establish already exists; that is, if children work cooperatively, independently, and dependably; if the accomplishment of a learning task is its own reward – rather than praise from the teacher or another gold star – if reading is fun, then children are ready for this program with little orientation other than the laying of a few "ground rules." Generally, careful preparation pays dividends. Purposes which the above plan hopes to achieve are 1) allow for thorough understanding of and involvement in each facet of the program, 2) provide the security which children need of knowing what is expected of them by the teacher, 3) sustain its freshness and the children's interest in the program until they have had sufficient time to experience some of its reward, and 4) shorten the initial independent reading periods until work habits and routine are well established.

It will be noted that this plan follows somewhat closely those prescribed for Individualized Reading, with the exception of grouping for skills instruction. Since a basal reading skills program is being conducted concurrently, this has been omitted. Individual conferences and observations of independent reading are ideal opportunities for checking up on teaching – and on what needs to be taught – in the skills program. They also provide excellent opportunities to encourage children to practice what they know. Much teaching will still go on. A teacher cannot resist pointing out cues to the child as she assists him in understanding and pronouncing words. Children teach one another as they read aloud together and give help and encouragement. Possibly the most learning of all will take place as children establish more firmly the skills they have mastered and develop new insights through extensive practice in reading.

III. MATERIALS

A. CHILDREN'S READING MATERIALS

Obtaining a suitable number of books of good quality for initiating this program will require organization and cooperative efforts. Teachers and school administrators in the area, University staff, lay people who have specialized knowledge, pupils in the schools, and school patrons may all

make invaluable contributions. The worth and promise of the program will win its support from those who understand well its design and purposes. The following criteria will be useful as guides in selecting and constructing reading materials for these children.

1. Criteria for Selecting and Constructing

a. The vocabulary should be such that the meanings and pronunciation of a sufficient proportion of the words will be recognized to prevent feelings of confusion, discouragement, and frustration.

b. The conceptual content should also be sufficiently within the realm of the child's understanding that he is not confused or frustrated to the point of discouragement.

c. The subject matter should provide an element of reward beyond that of pride of accomplishment in the reading. It may be of something familiar and loved. It may help answer questions or stimulate new interests. It may arouse pleasurable emotions such as pride, excitement, suspense, humor, or appreciation. It may portray problem situations which are resolved by characters with whom the reader can readily identify. It should in some way tie in with the child's life situation and with his search for a greater understanding of himself and his world.

d. There should be a wide variety of reading materials in each classroom to satisfy children's widely varied needs and abilities. Children in one age group may vary four to six years in mental ability and this is but one of many characteristics which affect reading performance.

e. The supply must be adequate. For the first year of the program there may be a large overlap of books among grades. For example, a third grade room may contain copies of many used in first, second, fourth, and fifth grades. Each year additional books may be added to lessen duplications. Use of centralized library resources will be an advantage in this program.

f. Multiple copies of many favorite books should be available to accommodate more children and for small group use.

g. Reading materials should be attractive in format. Arrangement of text and illustrations, spacing of lines and words,

size and quality of print, appropriateness of illustrations, texture and quality of paper, attractiveness of binding – all make an impact upon the reader and affect his selection and enjoyment of a book.

2. Sources

Reading materials may be from many sources. They might include class and school publications, stories and poems written and shared by children, teacher constructed materials, current periodicals, maps, globes, trades books and stories from basal readers which have particular appeal for Indian children or are appealing to children of all cultures. These and books of general interest will be worked into the program as children's interests expand. The initial reading stimulus will come from books which have been designed for the children who will be reading them.

3. Compiling and Organizing

Suggested steps in carrying out the project of collecting, constructing, and organizing materials for this program are as follows:

a. Investigate books now in print and select those suitable for the program.*
b. Investigate the availability of materials constructed by teachers and schools in the area for use in their own programs. These will be especially suitable as they will have been tested in the classroom.**
c. Collect source materials for writing stories and books, both fact and fiction. Many books written for mature readers may be mined for plots, legends, and lore. Appropriate subject matter may be contributed by specialists in Indian culture, by adult tribe members, and by the children themselves. Interviews may be taped and transcribed or written as

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*Excellent annotated bibliographies are available, such as the *Children's Catalog* published by H. W. Wilson Co. every five years with a yearly supplement and Dr. Ruth Strang, *et al*, *Gateways to Readable Books.*

**And make sure book contains acknowledgement of source.

dictated. Stories from the last mentioned sources may need few revisions.

d. Estimate the number of volumes desired for each reading ability level, taking into consideration 1) that readability should be closer to independent than instructional levels of children, 2) that similar books may serve several grades, 3) that books in each grade must encompass at least two preceding and one succeeding grade levels, and 4) that each room be assigned a quantity equal to at least three times its enrollment. More would be desirable.

To initiate this plan in six grades, each with twenty-five pupils, each would need a core of books on its own grade level plus duplicates from the grade levels below and above. A feasible proportion would be one-third from the grade or grades below, one-third on grade level if these are fairly independent reading, and one-third above. If the program includes first grade, many picture books with short captions will be included for readiness. For sixth grade, additional books on a more mature level will be needed. Thus, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades will need twenty-five on grade level, twenty-five duplicates of those assigned to the grade levels below, and twenty-five from grades above. First and sixth grades will each need fifty volumes which cannot be duplicates as no grades precede nor follow.

e. Inventory all appropriate books presently available and categorize by reading levels considering vocabulary, concepts, and interests. A team of experienced classroom teachers may pass judgments in addition to those given in published listings.

f. Determine the added number of volumes needed for each grade.

g. Select from the collection of story materials those judged most suited to each grade level (or, more appropriately, age group).

h. Adapt stories already written and write additional stories needed to fill out the desired number of volumes.

i. Edit these stories with some attention to a good graded vocabulary list. Readability formulas may be used as an additional check if desired. (Again, experienced teacher judgment may be as good a test as any.)

j. Plan and prepare illustrations. Children's drawings will be excellent for the stories they have contributed.
k. Print and bind the books attractively. A suggestion here might be to use paper backs for the first bindings. Let children be the final judges as to a book's merit. As frequent use reveals its popularity, it earns a sturdy cover. When a book wears out with reading, it has passed a valid test of readability.

B. TEACHERS' GUIDE

No marking or color will indicate reading ability levels. These will be useful only to the teacher and will be contained in the guide prepared for her use.

A looseleaf manual for teachers' use may include the following information.

1. A statement of purposes and a suggested plan of organization and procedures as outlined above.
2. A listing of all books used in the program with a designation of approximate reading levels. This will be supplemented as new books are made available.
3. A comprehensive graded basal vocabulary list. This may be valuable, both as a checklist for evaluating word mastery and for teacher reference in guiding children's reading.
4. Suggestions for correlating supplemental reading activities with other areas of the curriculum such as music and art, social studies, science, and the other language arts.
5. A bibliography of useful references.

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